

# Afterschool in the Time of COVID-19

July 2020

Since the first statewide stay-at-home orders were issued in mid-March, individuals across the United States have found their lives and livelihoods upended by the coronavirus. As states enact safety measures and transition between phases of reopening to combat the virus, families are struggling with school closures, job losses, food insecurity, and more. Afterschool programs are joining local efforts to address the urgent needs of children and families while facing an uncertain future themselves.<sup>1</sup>

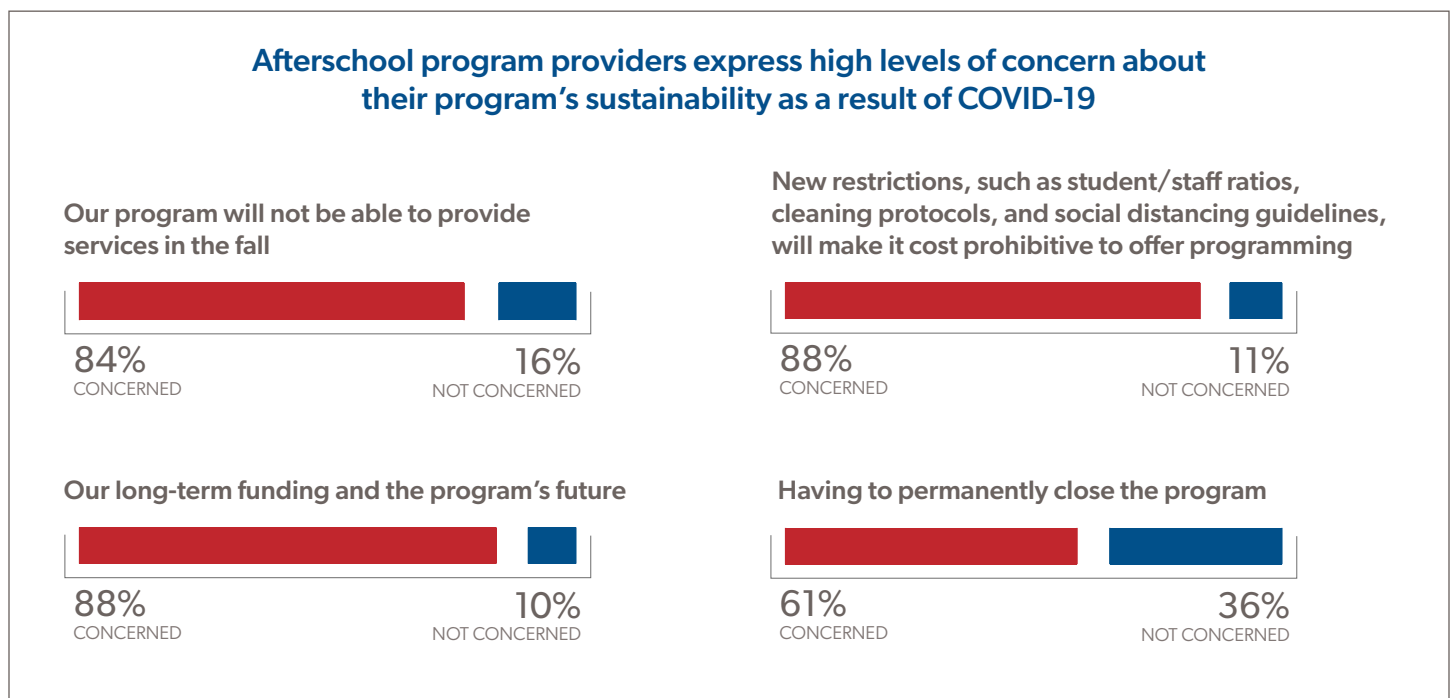
Throughout the crisis, many afterschool providers have been innovating to stay connected with students and keep them safe, healthy and engaged in learning, even while struggling to keep their own doors open. Many programs face budget shortfalls and will need additional staff and professional development, as well as more space and resources to provide consistent care for children and families as school schedules shift.

In the first in a series of surveys that take the pulse of the afterschool field, it is clear that although afterschool programs remain a vital partner to help young people emerge from this crisis strong, resilient, and hopeful, they are in need of dire support.

## The future of afterschool programs is in jeopardy

The *Afterschool in the Time of COVID-19* survey finds that afterschool programs are severely affected by the hardships created by the pandemic. As programs work to continue to provide services in their communities, they face their own struggles, from funding to staffing, with a majority unsure if the worst is over or yet to come (55%).

*84% of programs report that they are concerned that they will not be able to provide services in the fall*

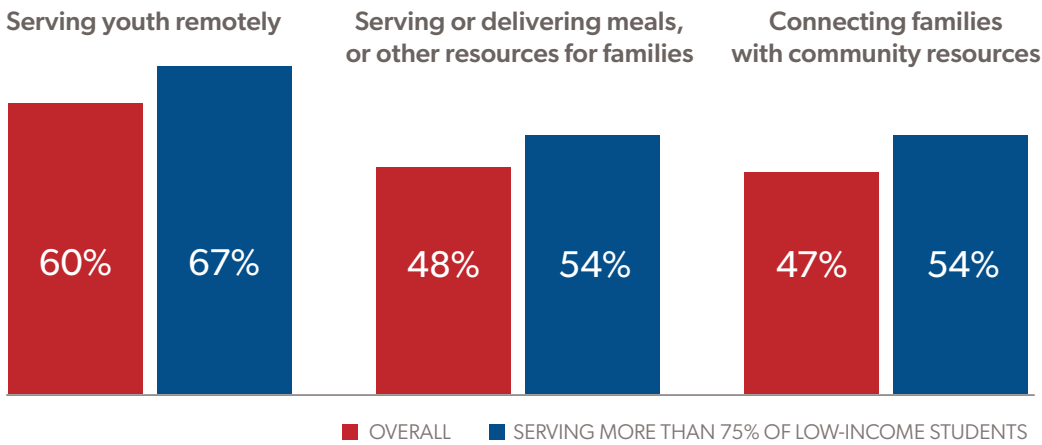


<sup>1</sup>Data are based on an online survey, conducted by Edge Research between May 28-June 30, of 914 program providers representing more than 6,000 program sites.



## In spite of challenges, afterschool programs are stepping up

While challenged on multiple fronts, afterschool programs continue to provide critical supports in their communities, with programs serving high-need students and families especially active. **Overall, 70% of respondents report serving students in some capacity.**



### Among 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC respondents:

67% serving students remotely

55% serving as a meals site, delivering meals, or distributing other resources

53% connecting families with community resources

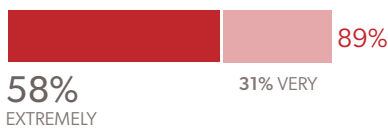
### 18% of respondents report providing care for children of essential workers

The well-being of children and families remains a priority for afterschool programs. An overwhelming majority of survey respondents report high levels of concern about those they serve. While most programs have innovated to stay open, they are only able to reach a fraction of the children and youth they were serving pre-COVID, with the average number of students served decreasing from 933 students per program to 368.

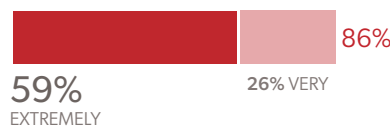
### Afterschool providers are highly concerned about their students and families<sup>2</sup>

Our students are missing opportunities for social connections with peers and caring adults

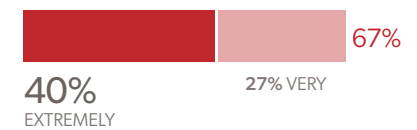
OVERALL:



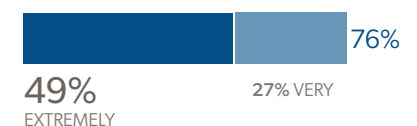
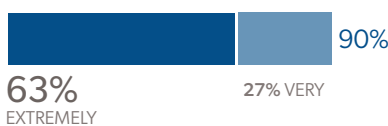
Our students are experiencing learning loss



Our students are experiencing food insecurity



SERVING MORE THAN 75% OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS:



<sup>2</sup>Totals may be different due to rounding.

**78% of afterschool program providers are concerned that they will lose touch with students in need as a result of COVID-19**

## Afterschool programs in need of additional supports

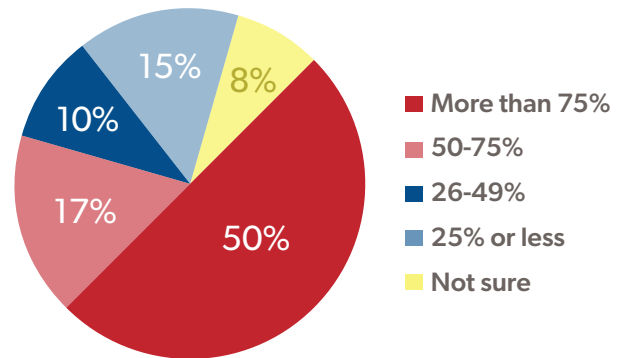
When asked about staffing, 45% of respondents reported that they have laid off or furloughed staff, 31% have reduced hours of staff, and 12% reported that while they have not laid off or furloughed staff, they anticipate doing so in the future.

Of those who have laid off or furloughed staff, two-thirds have 50% or more of their staff who have been impacted.

Although programs overall rely on a mix of funding sources, responses from program providers demonstrate that public investment in afterschool programs is a necessary component for programs' ability to continue to provide supports in their community.

- Programs that received a Paycheck Protection Program loan were almost 2.5 times more likely to physically open in some capacity compared to programs that did not receive a loan (34% vs. 14%).
- Programs relying only on parent fees were almost twice as likely to be completely closed than programs overall (46% vs. 26%), as well as more than 3.5 times less likely to offer virtual programming (14% vs. 51%).

### The percentage of afterschool program staff that has been laid off or furloughed<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Among respondents who reported that they laid off or furloughed staff.

To meet the needs of their community, afterschool program providers are calling for additional guidance and resources.

**> 8 in 10**  
program providers say



funding sources  
(84%)

&



better guidance and resources to protect health and safety of staff and students (82%)

are "extremely" or "very" important to their program.

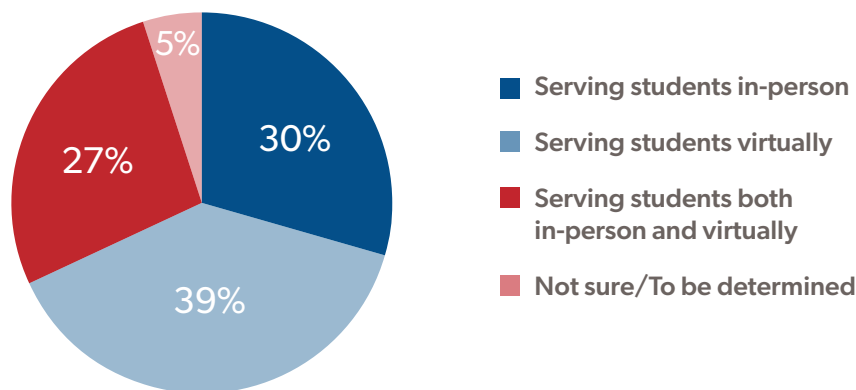
### Program providers are saying...

- “ The uncertainty of our week-to-week reality makes it very difficult to plan for the future.
- “ The central challenges for us are uncertainty around school day schedules, space/safety limitations and affordability for our low/moderate income working parents.
- “ Many of our normal donors are holding off on donations and such due to fear of the unknown with COVID and the economy. Our staff are tired, stressed, and at increased risk all while worried about whether or not they will have a job in the months to come.

## A hopeful outlook

Despite the challenges reported by program providers, a majority of respondents are optimistic about the future of their afterschool program (52%). In fact, at the time of the survey, 61% of respondents were planning to offer summer programming. Additionally, looking toward the fall, it is promising that 62% of respondents report that they are in conversations organized by school districts or schools about how to reopen schools. As the country moves through the ups and downs of recovery, the afterschool field remains an essential partner to help ensure children and families have the necessary supports to weather the hardships of the pandemic and communities emerge from the crisis stronger and more united.

**Of program providers who are serving students in the summer, plans include a mixture of in-person and virtual programming**



## This is Afterschool

At the Irwin A and Robert D Goodman Community Center (GCC) in Madison, Wisconsin, staying connected to their students and families has been the driving force behind their response to the coronavirus. In addition to hosting online classes, activities, and tutoring sessions, GCC staff hold office hours and open chat rooms to speak one-on-one with parents and students. Staff also regularly communicate with school day teachers to find out if there are students who would benefit from additional support and if there are students who the program can check in on. For example, using funds from an emergency COVID-19 grant, the program purchased Chromebooks for students who were not able to receive them through the school district. The program also partners with local schools to provide families with care packages that include school supplies, activities, and books, as well as personal care and household products that are not available through the local food pantry.

To learn more, find the full survey topline document at:  
[www.afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm)

